MATWATCH

213 Pine Hills Ave. Auburn Al 36830

SUPER WEEKEND EDITION!!!!!

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Wrestle War '90

LEX LOSER AGAIN BUT SAVES STING FROM 3 HORSEMEN

GREENSBORO, N.C.----On the verge of winning his first NWA world heavyweight championship, Lex Luger dropped Ric Flair from his "human torture rack" to save the injured Sting from an attack by Ole and Arn Anderson Sunday night in the main event of WRESTLE WAR '90 at Greensboro Coliseum. Luger was counted out at 38:07 while fending off the Andersons.

Despite a hot main event, no titles changed hands on the mediocre show, highlighted by stellar individual performances by Jim Cornette and referee Nick Patrick and tremendous drama late in the finale before 9,894.

NWA WORLD TITLE: RIC FLAIR D. LEX LUGER (COUNTOUT)

The crowd exploded for the pre-match ringside appearance of Sting, on crutches, who received a nearly four-minute ovation. Luger led virtually the first ten minutes of the match with power moves and no sales of Flair finesse maneuvers. But Flair gained control at 9:56 when Luger missed a body block and sailed over the top. Flair gained six two-counts with a variety of moves until Luger recovered to choke Ric at 20:00 and went for a sleeper which Flair escaped at 22:15. Flair was handed the Jerry Lawler crotchpost at 23:20 but Lex badly misapplied the figure-4 before gaining two 2 1/2 counts on powerslams. After a Luger backslide for a 2 5/6 count at 25:56, Flair gained four more near falls with an atomic drop, two elbows and a double-arm suplex before applying a sleeper which Lex escaped at 29:25.

After three atomic drops on the right knee, Flair went for the figure-4 at 31:44 which brought Sting hobbling to ringside. As Luger escaped the Flair finisher, Sting shook Luger by the head, virtually demanding Lex rally. In one of the most dramatic moves ever in an NWA world title match, Sting slapped Luger's face, which exploded the heavily pro-Luger crowd. If Hulk Hogan's comebacks are Supermanish, Luger's was Herculean. Lex didn't sell any of four Flair offensive moves, including a banging into the rail. Luger scored with a military press and three powerful clotheslines, the last sending Flair over the top rope at 34:50. A suplex brought a 2 7/8 count for Luger. In the corner, WOMAN slapped Luger, who then grabbed Nancy by the arm and attempted to lift her like an elevator. Flair kneed Luger from behind, the blow also knocking out referee Patrick.

At 36:03, Luger creamed Flair with a powerslam and could have pinned him for an eight-count. Down the aisle come Ole and Arn and Lex decks both with clotheslines. At 37:20, Luger went for the torture rack but as he had Flair all but defeated, Arn grabbed Sting from behind and as Ole prepared to lower the boom, Lex dropped Flair and went like a madman after the Andersons in defense of the helpless Sting. Patrick revived and seeing the melee outside the ring, began a count with brilliant reluctant emotion. At 38:07, Luger was counted out, losing his third pay-per-view in two years to Flair. The Andersons and a recovered Flair then jumped Lex and Arn applied a DDT before the Steiner Brothers came for the save. A dramatic finish saw Sting hobble into the ring to raise Luger's hand. MATCH RATING: PILEDRIVER...I still hang to the belief the title should have changed on this show but the emotion was some of the strongest I have ever witnessed in that last 20 minutes.

NWA WORLD TAG TITLE: STEINERS D. ANDERSONS (16:05)

In the words of GREEN ACRES' Hank Kimball, it was a good match...well, not a good match...well, not a bad match, either. But Ole showed his 47 years in this one. The Steiners cleaned house early and Scott demonstrated a lot of stiff power moves in the first 10 minutes. Then, the Andersons went to their old work-on-the-arm strategy at the 13-minute mark. But Scott kneed Arn in a dive attempt from the second rope and scored with the Frankensteiner at 15:15 to tag in Rick. Old Dogface went to work with stiff clotheslines and then, coming off a double whip, clotheslined Arn and small packaged Ole for the pin. The Andersons stomped Rick & Scott after but the Steiners eventually ran off the bad guys. RATING: DRAW....they really tried to get it together but this one needed Tully Blanchard to click.

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WRESTLE WAR WRAPUP

U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP
Tom Zenk/Brian Pillman d. Freebirds (25:18)

This one never got off the ground. Both teams were capable of better, there were far too many restholds and 25 minutes was much too long. Michael & Jimmy just didn't seem into the match and ringsiders called this one the one that dragged down the show. Zenk was in jeopardy for nearly nine minutes and at 22:23, Hayes scored with a bulldog for a 2-count. But Zenk rallied for a DDT and both tagged. Pillman cranked out four straight dropkicks and in a move which characterized this affair, Hayes tossed Brian over the top which was supposed to be followed by Brian's pullup back inside. Instead, Pillman was tossed into the ring apron cameraman and had to makeshift a recovery. While the 'Birds were double-teaming Zenk and Garvin was preparing the DDT, Brian scored a flying cross body block for the pin at 25:18. BOMB-PLUS...I hate to rate it this low but it was a major disappointment.

CHICAGO STREET FIGHT
Road Warriors d. The Even Newer Skyscrapers

The Warriors still pop Greensboro, particularly with that entrance on motorcycles. With Danny Spivey dropped by WCW for missing shows, the AWA's Mike (Destruction Crew) Enos was the other 'Scraper (under a mask) but Enos doesn't even stand 6' and was more like a Tentscraper. The finish came at 5:00 when Hawk decapitated Enos but DOOMED, who cut a deal to be managed by Teddy Long at ringside, ran in and had a 3-minute brawl with the Roadies which was far superior to the match. Teddy was presslammed into Simmons & Reed at the end. These four may match up better than you think. RATING: DRAW...up from RESTHOLD-PLUS for the post-match.

ROCK & ROLL EXPRESS D. MIDNIGHT EXPRESS

Had it not been for the main event, this one---old as the feud is---would have stolen the show. Jim Cornette put on his finest performance since Paul E. Dangerously first appeared in WCW and Nick Patrick was outstanding counterpoint to Corny's shenanigans.

The funniest segment came when Corny complained about Patrick shoving Stan Lane and hit the apron mashing his finger several times into Nick's chest. Patrick returned the point and Corny spilled out of his blazer and he & Nick began one of the most hilarious shadowboxing sessions ever. Corny hasn't trimmed down from his Christmas groceries, either. He must be on the Gavin McLeod diet.

All six in this one (including Patrick) worked their cans off and the finish came when after Corny popped Robert Gibson with the racket for a 2 7/8 count, Robert revived and he and Ricky Morton scored a double package for the fall at 22:55. RATING: POWERSLAM-PLUS....this was an acceptable 20-plusser.

NORMAN D. CACTUS JACK

Plenty of tough bumps in this match, three hard-knockers from Cactus but the crowd---after a big pop for Norman's entrance---didn't get into this one, either. In the first 4:15, Cactus took a hard knock on his knee on the floor and a later one on his shoulder. But overall, the match seemed like a brawl in slow motion.

Cactus went for the Ivan Koloff throat dive at 8:15 but missed a second one. Norman rallied but as Cactus attempted a piledriver, Norm reversed it and fell with the Norman squash for the fall at 9:30. RATING: RESTHOLD...ringside purists loved Cactus' work but at the 5:30 mark, a chant of "Bor-ring" even went up.

KEVIN SULLIVAN/BUZZ SAWYER D. DYNAMIC DUDES

Kevin appears to be beyond the point you can put him in an opener and get the crowd going. The Dudes got an early pop and had a strong first 4:00. But Sawyer rallied to batter Shane Douglas with a belly-to-belly and second suplex for two-counts at 5:45. Sullivan came in and Johnny Ace had to get the crowd started again.

After Shane was in dire straits, Johnny tagged in for a rally but at 9:45, Ace missed a headscissors badly and Buzz flew off the top for the pin at 10:14. RATING: RESTHOLD-PLUS...not an overly hot opener and the female ringside attendants had more heat.

GREENSBORO GOSSIP

The major rumors you'll probably hear out of this show, neither of which are probably true, are that Curt Hennig and Terry Taylor will come to WCW by summer as Horsemen. Could be, but I doubt it....Jim Ross has been named to call amateur wrestling for TBS on the GOODWILL GAMES and on some pre-GOODWILL editions of U.S. OLYMPIC GOLD....The Holiday Inn Four Seasons overflowed with WCW folks Sunday night and I assure you, a good time was had by all....At least 30 guys flew or drove in from around the country and Canada and I enjoyed meeting or reuniting with every last one.

John Hitchcock, who owns the PARTS UNKNOWN comics store in Greensboro, was leading the front row holding up gymnastics-type rating cards for the moves. But Hitch was asked to remove his We Have HERD Enough sign by security....Teddy Long and Bill Apter pre-show were doing impressive impersonations of each other....I won't review the TV show until next week's issue because I haven't seen the tape and after an 8-hour drive back, won't watch until later.

On the show itself: as far as the live crowd, it hurt not having an eighth or ninth match. A 3-hour show needs at least 3 matches an hour and fewer bouts forced it into more '70s-style lengths which just don't hold attention of the younger crowd....On a test grade of 100, I'd give the live show about a 70. It just didn't measure up to last year's Nashville WW, which---admittedly---was hard to follow....Lots of complaints about a 15-minute delay in beginning souvenir sales after the crowd was admitted at 6 p.m.

I couldn't confirm because deals have not been signed but I'm told several new faces will likely enter over the next few months. No, no WWF thefts expected...Realistically, this was a one-match show and if that got over with the TV audience, then it was a success. I do contend Luger should have won the belt but you be the judge if Ross & Funk adequately sold Lex's sacrifice to save thing. I haven't watched the tape yet....WCW will do a 3-hour live special (not a CLASH but a WCW SPECIAL EDITION) April 14 from 6-9 p.m. and talk is a Flair-Luger rematch will be on top. It's from Houston where NWA syndicated ratings have hit as high as 7.8 lately.

The Main Event

HULK STILL RULES BUT WARRIOR ON WARPATH IN MOTOWN MADNESS

DETROIT---Hulk Hogan defeated Randy Savage in 10:50 to retain the WWF heavyweight title at NBC'S THE MAIN EVENT Friday night at the Joe Louis Arena. The somewhat anticlimactic opener featured a post-match knockout of the Macho King by heavyweight boxing champion James (Buster) Douglas. In the finale, the Ultimate Warrior retained the WWF Intercontinental belt over Dino Bravo in 4:10 but Warrior was angered at a Hogan save from a doubleteam attempt by Bravo and Earthquake Tenta, setting up the WRESTLEMANIA VI topliner.

HULK HOGAN VS. RANDY SAVAGE

In somewhat of a disappointment, Douglas was used as an outside-the-ring official, which somewhat diluted his capacity to nothing more than celebrity---something, of course, Vince McMahon intended. Savage kneed Hogan out of the ring at 1:38 but Hogan rallied and, at 2:00, Hogan ducked a Savage knee and Randy blasted Sherri Martel on her back outside the ring. Hogan then went to a power offense, led by 3 elbows at 3:15. But Sherri tripped up Hogan at 3:48 before Hulk grabbed Sherri by the hair. That gave Savage a chance to rally. A Savage clothesline gained a near-fall at 4:30. Hogan, on the apron, was choked by Sherri at 5:05 and Douglas, slow at first to act, threw and chased Sherri out of the Joe Louis Arena, cuing the first commercial break.

After the Coors ads, Savage had a sleeper on Hogan at 7:00 but Hulk elbowed his way out until Randy decked him with another clothesline for a 2-count at 7:50. Twenty seconds later, Randy clobbered Hulk from the apron, then on the head from the top rope for another near-fall at 8:25. Two more 2-counts later, Savage went to a series of left hands and knocked Hogan to the outside. After a bodyslam, Savage went for his flying elbow at 9:52 but Hogan went for his Superman comeback after a 2-count. A series of rights by Hogan was followed by a trade of blows and an eyegouge by Savage. But as the two returned to the ring, Hogan went for a punch and accidentally decked the in-ring ref. He then grabbed Savage and scored with the foot in face and legdrop. Douglas rolled in and counted the fall in 10:50. After, Savage---realizing Douglas counted the fall---taunted the boxing champ and slapped Douglas. Finally, after a discussion with Hogan, Hulk shoved Savage into a Douglas punch which couldn't have knocked out Jim Cornette, followed by a second one which dropped an apparently-laughing Savage to the mat, followed by a joint Hogan/Douglas celebration. MATCH RATING: DRAW...tremendous heat but this looked like just an average house show match simply designed to get Douglas over and Mike Tyson had to wish he'd faced the same knockout punch.

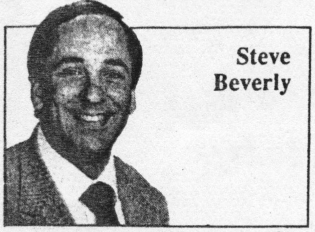
ULTIMATE WARRIOR VS. DINO BRAVO

After a major early flurry, Warrior rolled under the ring, dragged Jimmy Hart under with him and stripped Hart down to his red drawers and red socks. Earthquake Tenta eventually jumped Warrior from behind to set up a Bravo bearhug and at 3:15, Bravo scored a 2 1/2-count on a one-armed backbreaker. At 3:40, Warrior began a major rally, then scored with three clotheslines and a Road Warrior Hawk shoulderblock before scoring the fall at 4:10. But Tenta entered for a doubleteam until Warrior clobbered their heads together. Tenta then rallied from behind and dropped two big elbows on Anabolic. As Earthquake was about to blast down from the top rope, Hogan sped from the dressing room and disposed of Tenta. But Warrior, not appreciative of the help, got into a shouting match with Hogan. Three different referees had to separate the two but no blows were traded before the break. RESTHOLD-PLUS...only for the post-match angle does it get a PLUS.

DETROIT DATELINES: I'll probably be in the minority but I felt this was the worst of the three prime time specials. The title change two years ago and the Savage/Hogan split last year had much more dramatic intenstity, in my view....Vince was far too much Mucus Mouth on this one....Vince did have a good review of the Hogan/Warrior saga after....Production values were first rate and no real glitches and, fortunately, no time cue bloopers as last year.

BEST LINES: 1. Jesse Ventura, on Savage/Martel: "They remind me of Harry & Leona Helmsley on their best day." 2. Jesse, "James Buster Douglas is a Hulkamaniac, no doubt about it." 3. Jesse, advising Savage: "Wrestle Douglas, don't box him." 4. Douglas: "Hulk Hogan & I are going out drinking. He's a buttermilk man and I'm whole milk." BEST QUESTION: McMahon, to Hogan: "Was this your moment to steal the spotlight from the Ultimate Warrior?" ENGLISH LESSON - Hogan, "Wrestlemania coulda WENT down tonight." BEST PICTURES: 1. Savage with foot on Hogan's throat. 2. Sherri choking Hogan. 3. Referees attempting to separate Hogan/Warrior. 4. Jimmy Hart in red drawers. SEXIST REMARK: Jesse, "She is a queen who knows her place."

MATWATCH 25 SCALE: Announcing, 3.0; Quality of Matches, 1.8; Crowd Enthusiasm, 4.8; Production Values, 4.5; Overall Excellence of Show, 2.8. OVERALL RATING: 16.9.


Steve Beverly

FLAIR RESIGNS AS WCW BOOKER; HERD BECOMES PANEL CHIEF

GREENSBORO, N.C. --- The ax didn't fall and a bitter scene was eschewed. Ric Flair resigned last Thursday as chief booker for World Championship Wrestling, seven months after taking the slot amid threats of walking out on his three-year TBS contract to join Titan Sports.

Speculation had been rampant for six weeks that Flair's tenure as booker would end after WRESTLE WAR '90. Ironically, the Flair regime ends as TBS wrestling shows reach an apex in audience levels. Last week's NWA MAIN EVENT (see THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES), with a record 4.4 rating, drew 5.5 million viewers, more than four CLASH specials.

But while TV ratings skyrocket on TBS, audiences for NWA syndicated programs remain low---partially from weaker time periods and a poorer station lineup than WWF shows and in part from production staleness.

One insider close to the situation told MATWATCH, "Something had to give. Ric worked hard at this and whether you agree with the way he did things, he can't be criticized for his intensity. But he couldn't continue under this kind of pressure and do justice to his ring work. He just wasn't the same Ric Flair. Maybe he can get back to that now." According to sources, the resignation was handled professionally and no conditional deals were cut.

WCW senior vice president Jim Herd will replace Flair as chairman of the booking committee, which---for now---stays in effect, ending speculation creative direction would revert to a sole booker. WCW consultant Jim Barnett becomes vice chairman and MATWATCH has learned Barnett will take a more active role on day-to-day affairs. TBS host Jim Ross, WORLD WIDE co-host Terry Funk, Jim Cornette and Kevin Sullivan remain on the panel. Former NWA stars Joe Hamilton and Wahoo McDaniel will act as road agents.

COMMENTARY

As a whole, the biggest question mark is on retention of The Committee at all. Personality clashes and political infighting have characterized the various makeups of this panel since its inception late last March. After seeing this evolve, I'm convinced more than ever a single booker-with-assistants strategy is best for the long-term future.

This new makeup does narrow the number of active wrestlers to one and active managers to one, which is a plus. In addition, more influence is being exercised from the management side---something many wrestlers and hardcore fans question but which may be necessary to control the internal flaps.

One member of the panel has a reputation for stirring tensions between the players to ensure loyalty. That, too, must be controlled if it surfaces. The question also surfaces whether the load on Jim Herd will be too great to oversee the booking as well as the daily business operation.

The Ross/Funk/Cornette/Sullivan combo brings various strengths to the panel but committees in this and past organizations have not demonstrated great cohesion. Probably the greatest challenge facing The Committee now is to reconstitute itself to the task the Ross-led board of last spring created by bringing consistent fresh talent into WCW. Flair emphasized more revivals of past NWA heroes and heels which may have created short-term spot interest but did not bode well for a 1990s look.

I still believe eventually the promotion will revert to a single chief but these six minds now must get WCW through an emergency which has forced a babyface re-turn of its most solid heel and left the group over-tag teamed and underfaced with young singles. It must be reiterated this is the sixth administration over creative product since Ted Turner bought the NWA. It, perhaps, could be deemed a success if it could achieve the one element conspicuously lacking in the last 16 months: stability.

THIS WEEK'S HEADLINES

NWA BREAKS RATING RECORDS FOR 2 SHOWS

ATLANTA----Fresh on the heels of topping the 2 million homes level for the first time ever for weekly wrestling shows, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING and NWA MAIN EVENT drew record viewers for the weekend of Feb. 17-18.

MAIN EVENT scored a 4.4 rating, highest for any TBS weekly wrestling show since December 1985. The episode, topped by a Ric Flair/Arn Anderson vs. Rock & Roll Express tag battle, was seen in 2.3 million homes. The rating outpointed two past CLASH specials.

WCW rolled to a 4.0, its first time at that level since February 1987. The 2.13 million homes was a new all-time high for the Saturday night series. (For more ratings info, see RATINGS RAP, Page 8).

ADVERTISERS SHUN WWF, NWA SYNDICATED SHOWS

NEW YORK----ELECTRONIC MEDIA magazine reports a national advertiser "hit list" exists against buying commercials on specific syndicated TV series, including NWA and WWF wrestling.

In its Feb. 19 issue, EM details a 36-page report from the ad firm Telerep, which details 133 series and numbers of advertisers which refuse to buy time on each show.

At least eight advertisers shun the two major national wrestling promotions' shows, more than the five which boycott AMERICAN GLADIATORS but far fewer than the leader, A CURRENT AFFAIR, avoided by 94 companies.

EM could not obtain a list of the specific advertisers which boycott the shows.

"CHAIRFUL" HERVEY SETS HOLLYWOOD ON FIRE

LOS ANGELES---THE WONDER YEARS' Jason Hervey, a perennial NWA fan, became involved in a chair-wielding angle at the Feb. 18 Hollywood Heavyweight Wrestling card here.

Hervey, in the corner of Riki Ataki for his match against Lou Spiccoli, held Spiccoli for Ataki to gain revenge in a post-match brawl. A melee ensued and Hervey began swinging a chair at Spiccoli and several others.

During the brawl, Hervey went after Hollywood Heavyweight commissioner Dan Farren and promoter Broadway Danny Wolf. No injuries were reported but Farren was said to have been knocked down.

Hervey, not scheduled on the card, agreed to appear while sitting with booker Johnny Legend at the Cauliflower Alley Club Feb. 17.

SCALE: PINFALL! - Must See. PILEDRIVER - Excellent. POWERSLAM - Good. DRAW - Average. RESTHOLD - Fair. BOMB - Poor. PLUS - Midscale rating.

(WWF/USA) - Koko B. Ware d. Omar Atlas; Ted DiBiase d. Jerry Monti; Brutus Beefcake d. Rick Rude by DQ when Curt Hennig/Lanny Poffo run in; Bad News Brown d. Lee Peek; Tito Santana d. Black Bart; Kingfish Rhodes d. Rick Martel by DQ when Rick sprays "arrogance" in Dusty's face; Dino Bravo d. Keith Bronson; ANGLE: Roddy Piper-Bad News Brown get into it on Mean Gene's interview platform; Tugboat Thomas d. Dale Wolfe; Akeem d. Bret Hart. RESTHOLD.

(WWF/SYND.) - Demolition Smash d. Haku; Rick Rude d. Omar Atlas; Sheepwackers d. Alan Martin/Lee Peek; Roddy Piper d. Pez Whatley; Terry Taylor d. Tom Stone. RESTHOLD-PLUS

(NWA/SYND.) - [WORLD WIDE]: (U.S. TOURNEY) Tom Zenk/Brian Pillman d. Freebirds for titles; REPLAY: 4 Horsemen jump Steiners; Steiners d. Royal Family; INTERVIEW: Ross w. Sting to announce 6 months out; FUNK'S GRILL: Terry dances w. Dancin' Teddy Long; Road Warriors d. Pat Rose/Mark Kyle; REPLAY: 4 Horsemen/Sting/Luger saga. DRAW.
[NWA PRO]: (U.S. TOURNEY) Highlights: Zenk/Pillman d. Midnight Express; Dynamic Dudes d. Gladiator/Zam Panzer; M Ex d. Galaxians; Same RECAPS; Norman d. Nasty Ned Brady; Cactus Jack Manson d. Mike Rotunda using knucks. RESTHOLD.
[MAIN EVENT]: Ric Flair/Arn Anderson d. Rock & Roll Express when Flair knocks Robert Gibson's foot off the ropes; Kevin Sullivan d. Norman by DQ when Cactus Jack Manson holds Norman's leg outside ring; DOOMED wins squash. POWERSLAM.

(SCW) - Dino Minelli d. John Brewer; Nick Busich d. Jim Bryant; Billy Starr d. Allan Horne; Steve Lawler d. Tony Edwards; Joel Deaton d. Tony Key but refuses to release shininomaki before Black Ninja runs in but Deaton puts Ninja in shininomaki but Ninja throws fire at Deaton. BOMB-PLUS.

(ICW) - [RECAP SHOW]: Review of Wrestling School Dropout, profile of Lethal Weapons saga, profile of Tony Atlas and other ICW stars; Tony Atlas d. Bob Orton Jr. DRAW.

(CWA/SYND.) - Jeff Jarrett/Bill Dundee d. John James/Vern Rapp; USWA TAG TITLE: Southern Rockers d. Stud Stable for belts, retain in 2nd match, then lose them in 3rd; John Tatum d. Wrestling Pro. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(USWA) - VIDEOS: Jerry Lawler, Billy Travis, Dundee/Jarrett; Dutch Mantel/Chris Champion d. Stud Stable by DQ; REPLAY: Jarrett-Billy Joe Travis, Lawler-Junkyard Dog; Jarrett/Dundee d. Lawler/Travis. DRAW.

(NWA/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: (Key Match) Road Warriors d. DOOMED in 16 minutes. DRAW-PLUS.
[WCW]: (Key Matches) (U.S. TOURNEY SEMIFINALS): Zenk/Pillman d. M Ex; Freebirds d. Dynamic Dudes; ANGLE: Horsemen attempt to jump Lex Luger after jobber match but Steiners run in to chase off Ole & Arn and Flair backs away. POWERSLAM.

TV TEMPO

Feb. 19-25

(PORTLAND) - Big Beetlejuice d. Scotty the Body by DQ (over-top); ARM WRESTLING: Big BJ d. Brian Adams. Grappler interferes but Little BJ throws Coke in Grap's face. Big BJ grabs $1,000 and runs; Little BJ d. Adams by DQ when Adams/Grap try to break leg but Big BJ saves; Al Madril d. Bill Francis by using knucks; Ricky Santana d. Jonathan Holliday on reversal when Ginger tells ref of Holliday's shenanigans but Holliday attacks Ricky w. umbrella, Ginger hops on Holliday's back & Ricky hits JH with umbrella; Equalizer vs. Curtis Thompson still going as show ends; FIESTA GARDEN: Ginger returns & Madril says anyone who interrupts Garden gets dumped into garbage can. No one will do it. Equalizer & Santana argue and brawl into crowd; STRETCHER MATCH: Adams d. Rip Oliver when Adams crashes onto Rip's leg as Grappler holds it. POWERSLAM.

SPECIAL NOTE: Because of our trip to Greensboro to cover WRESTLE WAR '90, some shows are abbreviated or omitted for this week only. Full TV TEMPO results will resume next week.

LINES OF THE WEEK

1. Randy Savage & Arsenio Hall, ARSENIO HALL SHOW: (AH) "Pardon the interruption." (RS) "It was no interruption---it was like you were checking me out for a pre-nuptial agreement. Is that true?" (AH) "No. You don't make that much money." 2. Savage & Hall, AHS: (AH) "Ever since you've had Sherri, you've had a problem." (RS) "Too hot to handle...too cold to hold. You may be right but Donald & Ivana are having the same problem." 3. Jerry Lawler, USWA: "When you see Kerry Von Erich working out with weights, it's hard to tell what's the dumbbell." 4. Rick Steiner, NWA: "I never used my brain before, why should I use it in this match, Andersons?" 5. Terrence Garvin, USWA, on Texas Battleship: "If this guy's not a poster child for birth control, I don't know what is." 6. Gorilla Monsoon & Bobby Heenan, PTW: "(Mike) Tyson was grasping for his mouthpiece." (BH) "Did he have his lawyer there?" 7. Terry Funk, WWW: "Cactus Jack drinks more than his coffee black." 8. Lawler, USWA: "Some people are blond on their mother's side. Some are blond on their father's side. Jeff Jarrett is blond on peroxide." 9. Heenan, PTW: "Dusty & Sapphire use their own colognes. One uses JANITOR IN A DRUM. The other uses LIQUID WRENCH." 10. Samuel F. Kent & Boni Blackstone, WVEU: (BB) "The cruise on our big giveaway does not include the price of meals." (SFK) "Good. Maybe Joe Pedicino can go and lose some weight."

11. Lawler, USWA, to Marc Lowrance: "I'd pay you what you were worth but I can't write a check for nothing." 12. Arn Anderson, NWA: "Jumping on an Anderson is like a speck on a beach." 13. Heenan, PTW: "A lot of people are disappointed when they wake up and realize they live in Rochester." 14. Lawler, USWA, to Lowrance: "I know you went to the Columbia School of Broadcasting and they use you as a bad example." 15. Savage, AHS: "You never know who I may walk out with... Paula Abdul???" 16. Savage, AHS, on wrestling: "It's a fine

line between reality and fantasy." 17. Chris Cruise, WWW: "I got the impression Cactus Jack styled himself after you. He even looks like you, Terry." 18. Missy Hyatt, NME: "I'm from Tallahassee. My friends went to FSU. I can't believe that's Ron Simmons (as half of DOOMED)." 19. Cruise & Funk, WWW: (TF) "One thing you've never done is spend hours at the gym, Crispy. You probably spent it at the coffee shop." (CC) "Doughnuts....that kind of stuff...jelly." 20. Cruise, to Funk during Norman's music, "Shout": "Please don't sing, Terry."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Lance Russell & Michael Hayes, NWA PRO: (LR) "The crowd in Rainsville is certainly on the side of the Dynamic Dudes." (MH) "They weren't in Philadelphia." 2. Heenan, PTW: "Tyson is OUT!" 3. Lawler, USWA, to Lowrance: "You are the most BORING person I've ever heard."

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK - 1. Lawler, USWA: "What has 4 teeth and an IQ of 7? The entire front row of ringside." 2. Jesse Ventura, PTW: "What does Miami know about muscle?"

NICKNAME OF THE WEEK - JASON SCURVY (Johnny Legend, Hollywood Heavyweight Wrestling, on Jason Hervey).

BEST PICTURES - 1. WCW, Horsemen-Luger/Steiners angle. 2. PTW, Martel spraying "arrogance." 3. ARSENIO HALL SHOW, Savage getting on stools with Arsenio. 4. FUNK'S GRILL, Terry dancing with Teddy Long.

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - Ricky Morton, NME: "Rock & Roll is here to stay."

BOO AWARD - Heenan & Monsoon, PTW, for trashing Mike Tyson so constantly last Monday night.

TUBE TALK

I'll stand by that conservative estimate of 1.6% for the WRESTLE WAR buy-rate...BUT...when ratings go up on cable, the buy-rates tend to go up proportionately and the TBS ratings have been WAAAAY up. So, don't be surprised at a 2....El Gigante (Jorge Gonzales) is scheduled to resume training in Florida this week after his battle with pancreatitis....Lots of heat surrounding the ICW situation. Paul E. Dangerously angry over alleged attempts to undermine his booking role so don't be surprised if a blowout comes....Eric Sapracea turns heel on an upcoming ICW episode.

Ray Odyssey dislocated a shoulder on the ICW taping at Cutcher's and still worked 14 minutes but that match may not air....Can you believe it's been one year and one week since Ricky Steamboat won the NWA title?....North American wrestling has finally died on its Chattanooga slot....A hot match for syndication on an upcoming NWA TV: Arn Anderson defending the TV title against Scott Steiner.

An inside story on the McMahon-Tyson-King situation: two key sources have told MATWATCH Titan Sports became incensed because Don King allegedly was attempting to sign Hulk Hogan for himself for a pay-per-view card against Mike Tyson, a scenario which would have left Titan with no cash guarantee. We'll look more into that next week. FSB.

MATWATCH SUBSCRIPTIONS

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If you're calling for a casual chat and miss us, please leave your name and try again. I hope you understand that with as many subscribers as we have, I can't possibly afford all the personal return calls. But if you have substantial news for MATWATCH, we'll try to get back to you as soon as possible. No calls after 1 a.m. Eastern time, please.

ONE YEAR AGO IN MATWATCH...

---Lance Russell signs with Turner Broadcasting to join the NWA after years as a Memphis mainstay.

---Roddy Piper signs for WRESTLEMANIA V.

---Joe Pedicino agrees to an NWA contract as a "wrestling journalist."

---Ex-ladies' champ Mildred Burke dies at 73.

---PRIME TIME (3.6) and ALL-AMERICAN (3.3) top the cable ratings with MAIN EVENT the top NWA show at 2.9.

---NWA Announcer: "Even Rick Steiner's brand of action can't scare away notorious body odor."

OZARK MADNESS: NWA was 90 seats short of a sellout for its TV tapings last Tuesday in Ozark AL, remarkable for only having three weeks of syndicated TV in Montgomery and Dothan. The 3,200 paid saw a Flair-Luger dark match which ended with, of all things, the old dreaded Dusty ref bump. The crowd thought Luger had won the belt (he had thrown Flair over the top while the first ref was "down"). A new ref counted a pin for Lex and the crowd thought he'd won the belt but the old ref said he saw the over-top.

NOT JUST AN NWA RERUN: What the NWA crowd didn't know is that wasn't just a Dusty finish. Robert Fuller used to book it all the time there as a CWF screw job ending.

COMING ATTRACTIONS: One of the matches from Ozark: a 6-man with Eddie Gilbert/Tommy Rich/Ranger Ross vs. Buzz Sawyer/Cactus Jack Manson/Kevin Sullivan.

STARRCADE ON VIDEO: After an inexplicable delay, STARRCADE '89: The Video goes on sale March 28. The 125-minute tape retails for $39.98.

WHERE'S THE TAPE?: That NWA MAIN EVENT which did a record rating two Sundays ago almost didn't air. The TBS control room crew couldn't find the tape and had to call Joe Pedicino, who was no longer working with WCW, who referred them to production manager Keith Mitchell.

KUDOS & JUICE: Congratulatory memos have gone to the WCW office from TBS officials for the record audiences the last 2 weeks. But programmers still weren't thrilled about the Ric Flair juice job during NME last Sunday.

NO DISH: Satellite dish owners were quite angry when last Monday's Madison Square Garden WWF show was scrambled on the regular MSG Network feed. No explanation was given as to whether this is a permanent arrangement.

TRASHING TYSON: It's one thing to bury wrestlers when they leave an organization, a la Verne Gagne. But, even with the ill will between Titan Sports and the Don King/Mike Tyson combo, the on-air trash job Gorilla Monsoon and Bobby Heenan did on Tyson on PTW was tasteless.

ARSENIO'S KING: On the other hand, Randy Savage delivered his second straight hilarious performance on ARSENIO HALL SHOW last Tuesday. Savage plays a comic "soft" heel quick with a one-liner on ARSENIO, which you rarely see in the WWF.

WILL JOE GO?: Joe Pedicino is mulling the proposal to take the reins of ICW, as reported in last week's MATWATCH EXTRA. But his decision will revolve around money and whether it takes too much attention from his new advertising agency, The Ad Factory.

ANGRY COMMISSIONER: One of the New York state athletic commissioners was irritated at last Wednesday's ICW taping. When the fifth run-in was consummated in the first hour, ICW President Mario Savoldi was told it was more than enough.

MOOLAH'S GANG: Fabulous Moolah may be putting together a women's group to wrestle in Las Vegas this summer.

SLAMMERS MEMORIES: The SLAMMERS wrestling party center was presented with a Moolah and Count Billy Varga memorabilia case two weekends ago. SLAMMERS is doing nice business.

CAULIFLOWER ALLEY: Broadway Danny Wolf is doing a special again this year for FNN/SCORE on the Cauliflower Alley Club annual convention to honor wrestling's retired greats. Shohei Baba was one of this year's honorees. Date for the special has not been set.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON?: Capt. Lou Albano and his son Lou Jr. appeared last week on WWOR's late-night JOE FRANKLIN SHOW. They were plugging some of Johnny Rodz's indie cards and Lou introduced his son as wrestler-actor-real estate salesman-hairdresser Lou Albano Jr.

HOLLYWOOD HEAVIES: Mando Guererro and the Nightstalker won the Hollywood tag team belts in L.A. Feb. 18. But Conan defeated Chavo Guererro for the Hollywood heavyweight title. On the same card, in a Stefan DeLeon-Tim Talltree match, Talltree bladed DeLeon and accidentally hit an artery. DeLeon reportedly "juiced like a fountain" and required 16 stitches. Talltree was so shaken he considered quitting.

AFTER MANIA: Updated talk on Roddy Piper is he may try to ask out of the WWF after WRESTLEMANIA VI, instead of fall. Reports are Piper will be relegated to a feud with Rick Martel and still doing weekend double shots. But Titan will fight an early Piper departure for fear he'll jump to the NWA, something I doubt.

NO DUTCH TREAT: Dutch Mantel is now only skedded for a one-shot at the Omni, instead of a full NWA tour. He'll team March 11 with Tommy Rich vs. Kevin Sullivan and Buzz Sawyer.

CACTUS CASH: All Japan is reportedly ready to make a major offer to Cactus Jack Manson for a couple of tours. The head bump at the CLASH made a major impression.

NEW & IMPROVED: Missy Hyatt's speech courses have paid off, in my view. Missy is more poised and collected, she isn't silly with her comments and knows how to get in and out much more quickly than when she was doing color on the old CWF and UWF shows.

OUT WITH CHRIS: Unconfirmed reports are that Chris Adams is out in USWA. He'd been under major heat in recent weeks with the Jarrett people unhappy with how he ran spot shows.

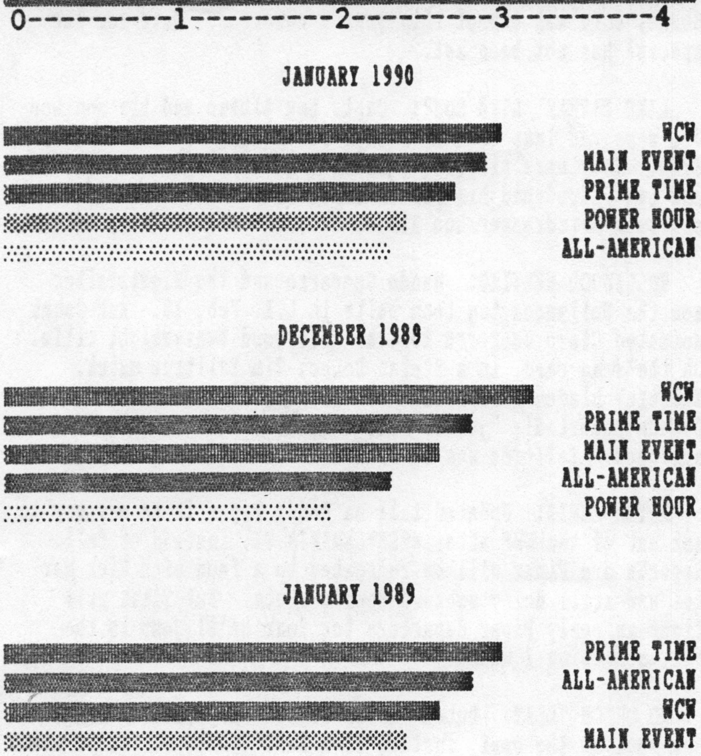
GOODHEART'S GOODIES: Joel Goodheart has another top-notch show March 31 at Temple University. In a "Battle of the Bam Bams" cage rematch, Terry Gordy meets Bam Bam Bigelow, Jerry Lawler puts up the USWA belt against Kerry Von Erich, Paul Orndorff faces Austin Idol (managed by Paul E. Dangerously) and D.C. Drake tangles with Larry Winters in an I QUIT match.

THANKS: My thanks to Joel for having us on his WIP Radio show Saturday night as a WRESTLE WAR '90 preview.

TBS/NFL: USA TODAY's Rudy Martzke reported last Thursday TBS will likely get a share of the NFL Sunday night cable package for an estimated $110 million a year. Realistically, that should boost fall ratings for NWA MAIN EVENT, assuming NME stays at 6:05 because the pre-game and NFL game would immediately follow, guaranteeing a huge lead-out audience for wrestling, often as important as the lead-in.

RATINGS RAP

THE JANUARY STORY



First, comparing January to January, which is the most accurate way to judge ratings, the Saturday and Sunday NWA shows have reassumed solid control. WCW jumped 15% over its January 1989 figures, even from the Ricky Steamboat return match the first week of WCW at 7:05 p.m. last year. MAIN EVENT skied to a 20% increase, keyed by some top-notch January matches.

WWF shows, on the other hand, both posted declines from last year, particularly ALL-AMERICAN, down 17% to a 2.4, one of its lowest averages ever. PRIME TIME dipped from 3.1 to 2.8, a 9% slide, arguably suffering from an erosion of the Monsoon-Heenan team.

Compared to December, POWER HOUR and NME showed the top gains, while the other three shows stayed flat or dipped a bit. WCW actually slid 6% to a 3.1 (which will be reversed in the upcoming February tally) and PRIME TIME slipped 3% to its 2.8 level.

The most impressive gain was posted by Friday night's POWER HOUR, up 25% to a 2.5, boosted by surprisingly strong lead-in numbers from the TBS FAMILY THEATRE movies and good lead-out audiences for a NIGHT TRACKS movie after.

Trends to watch: how strongly the WRESTLEMANIA buildup will affect the cable averages for WWF and if the aftermath of the WRESTLE WAR '90 finish affects the powerful momentum NWA on cable has rebuilt.

MAIN EVENT, WCW ECLIPSE RECORDS; WWF REASSERTS IN SYNDICATION

A key to the record-smashing ratings for NWA MAIN EVENT and WCW last week (see Page 4) were two Ric Flair matches. The Flair-Brian Pillman battle on WCW powered to a 4.6/8.4 share (2.47 million homes). Flair/Arn Anderson vs. Rock & Roll Express on NME scored the same 4.6 and an 8.6 share.

But in syndication, the WWF exploded to its top numbers since the pre-SUMMER SLAM buildup, while NWA dropped 11% for its first week in the U.S. tag tourney. ALL-AMERICAN, on cable, likewise, posted its third straight 3-plus rating, well up from its 2.4 level of December. PRIME TIME dropped another tenth from 2 weeks ago at 2.7.

CABLE

Week Ending Feb. 19	Rating	Share	Total Homes
NWA MAIN EVENT (TBS 2/18)	4.4	8.2	2.3 million
NWA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 2/17)	4.0	7.8	2.13 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 2/18)	3.1	7.8	1.6 million
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 2/19)	2.7	4.0	1.4 million
NWA M.E. (Replay) (TBS 2/17)	1.0	8.1	526,000

SYNDICATION
(Week Ending Feb. 4)

	Rating/Stations	Last Week	Year to Date
WWF	10.5/248	9.3/231	9.5
NWA	6.7/174	7.5/177	7.5

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